

REMARKS

The final Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 8, 10-12, and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by WEBER (U.S. Patent No. 6,434,524); rejects claims 3, 4, 9, 13, and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over WEBER in view of MAHAJAN et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,418,431); rejects claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over WEBER in view of PADMANABHAN et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,385,579); allows claims 20-24; and objects to claims 5-7 as containing allowable subject matter.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 20-24 are allowable over the art of record and that claims 5-7 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the present amendment, Applicants propose amending claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 5 and amending claims 6 and 7 to depend from claim 1. Moreover, Applicants propose canceling claims 5 and 17-19 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-4, 6-16, and 20-24 would remain pending upon entry of the present amendment.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 BASED ON WEBER

Claims 1, 2, 8, 10-12, and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by WEBER. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As set forth above, Applicants propose amending claim 1 to include the features of claim 5, which the final Office Action indicates as allowable if rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for immediate allowance. Claims 2, 8, and 10-12 depend from claim 1; therefore, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

Applicants propose canceling claims 17-19 herewith, thereby rendering the rejection of those claims moot.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103 BASED ON WEBER AND MAHAJAN ET AL.

Claims 3, 4, 9, 13, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over WEBER in view of MAHAJAN et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 3, 4, 9, 13, and 14 depend from claim 1. As set forth above, Applicants propose amending claim 1 to include the features of claim 5, which the final Office Action indicates as allowable if rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for immediate allowance. Since claims 3, 4, 9, 13, and 14 depend from claim 1, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103 BASED ON WEBER
AND PADMANABHAN ET AL.

Claims 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over WEBER in view of PADMANABHAN et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 1. As set forth above, Applicants propose amending claim 1 to include the features of claim 5, which the final Office Action indicates as allowable if rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for immediate allowance. Since claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 1, these claims are allowable for at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1.

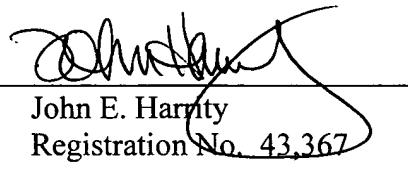
CONCLUSION

Because all claims should now be in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Applicants respectfully request that the present amendment be entered since the present amendment places this application in immediate condition for allowance. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the present amendment does not raise new issues or require a further search of the art since all of the claimed features have been previously presented to the Examiner for consideration.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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